

**Archaeological Evaluation Report
Land at The Woolmead
Farnham
Surrey**

NGR: 484118 147022

Planning Ref: WA/2018/0458

ASE Project No: 180453

Site Code: WME18

ASE Report No: 2018363

OASIS id: archaeol6-333637



Giles Dawkes

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey on the 1st and 12th November 2018. The fieldwork was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd in advance of a mixed-use redevelopment. Two trenches were excavated measuring up to 10m in length and a previously undertaken geotechnical test-pit recorded.

No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were recovered. The evaluated parts of the site appear to have been truncated to depths of between 65.30m OD and 67.80m OD. This truncation is probably associated with the construction of the 1960s underground car park.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey, centred National Grid Reference 484118 147022; Figure 1.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The site comprises a NE-SW aligned linear commercial development (Woolmead shopping centre), with a small residential block attached, located to the east of the historic centre of Farnham. It is bounded on all sides by roads (Woolmead Road, East Street and Bear Lane) and is occupied by an irregular arrangement of flat-roofed commercial properties constructed in the 1960s, with an underground car park under the central part of the building and a further low-level open air car park to the rear of the western end. The existing buildings on the site are to be demolished and replaced with a residential and commercial development with underground parking and open landscaped areas. The original 1960s construction work involved the demolition of large numbers of historic buildings along East Street, without any archaeological record.

1.2.2 The underlying geology comprises Gault Clay overlain by river terrace gravels associated with the River Wey. The British Geological Survey records no historic boreholes on the site. A programme of geotechnical investigation was carried out while the impact assessment was being prepared. Most of the pits were left open and were inspected by ASE. The pits were excavated to investigate the depth of foundations and existing retaining walls, but visibility was limited due to the small size of the holes (intended only to chase modern foundations).

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Outline planning permission was granted in October 2016 for a mixed residential and commercial development with car parking (WBC planning ref. WA/2015/2387). A desk-based heritage assessment was submitted with that application which discussed the archaeological and heritage impacts of the development (Beale 2015). The Surrey County Council archaeological officer further commented in his consultation response that he required the submission of a detailed archaeological impact assessment to accompany any future detailed planning application. This was prepared by ASE (James 2018) and submitted with the current planning application. The assessment was approved by the SCC archaeological officer, who requested that the following planning condition be attached should planning consent be granted:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.'

1.3.2 In response, a Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2018) for a programme of archaeological evaluation was approved by the Surrey County Council

archaeological officer.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report details the results of the following archaeological evaluation carried out on the 1st and the 13th November 2018. The fieldwork was carried out by Giles Dawkes, managed by Paul Mason (fieldwork) and Dan Swift (post-excavation).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.2 The Farnham area has produced evidence for all periods of prehistoric settlement, reflecting its position within the Wey valley at the meeting point of chalk, sand and clay. Sites include Palaeolithic artefacts found in the river gravels, Mesolithic settlement sites north-east of the town, and evidence for later prehistoric activity from within and around the town.
- 2.1.3 Roman evidence within the Farnham area is dominated by small-scale pottery production sites, forming part of the Alice Holt pottery industry. A Roman road from the town of Vindomis (Neatham, Hampshire) to London has been postulated running through the town.
- 2.1.4 Farnham itself probably began life as an Anglo-Saxon riverside farm in the 6th-7th century, evidence for which has been found during gravel quarrying – the place-name is first recorded in 685-8 as *Fernham*, meaning 'enclosed place in the bracken'. It is likely to have been a small settlement around the church, located south-west of the historic core.
- 2.1.5 At the time of the Domesday Book of 1086, Farnham lay within an estate owned by the Bishop of Winchester. It remained in the hands of the Bishops through the medieval period, controlled by the castle they built in the 12th century on the slopes to the north, with a new borough laid out between the original parish church and the castle, enclosed by earthwork defences first recorded in 1218 (and located running to the west of Bear Lane in 1998). The original borough encompassed a T-shaped street layout, comprising burgrave plots laid out to each side of Castle Street, and extending across part of the southern side of The Borough. The site originally lay outside this core area, but suburban expansion along East Street occurred later in the medieval period (probably no earlier than the 14th century). The settlement pattern along East Street (originally called Dogflud) was characteristic of this period, with an assortment of buildings along the street frontage with long narrow tenement plots behind filled with outbuildings, workshops, cesspits and vegetable plots.
- 2.1.6 The street developed a less salubrious reputation in the post-medieval period, particularly when it became the main road to the military camps around Aldershot, and many public houses were established. All of these buildings were demolished without record when the existing development was constructed in the 1960s, and the road layout was altered to create a large island plot. The original historic layout is clearly evident on the Farnham Tithe map of 1836 and on subsequent Ordnance Survey editions.
- 2.1.7 The site lies within an Area of High Archaeological Potential (WA042 Farnham Historic Core). This a local non-statutory designation. No other heritage designations apply.
- 2.1.8 The Surrey Historic Environment Record records no heritage assets (designated or non-designated) within the site boundary. An 18th/early 19th century milestone is located on the edge of the pavement at the corner of East Street and Bear Lane (SHER Ref. MSE3345) immediately south of the

site, while a finds spot of a Mesolithic flint artefact (a polisher) is recorded from the corner of The Borough and South Street (SHER Ref. MSE1701).

- 2.1.9 Historic mapping shows the density of previous occupation on the site. The Tithe map of 1836 shows an unbroken frontage along East Street, apart from occasional alley and entries, with linear plots extending back to an east-west aligned boundary, with fields beyond. Development subsequently extended up the eastern side of Bear Lane, and the fields behind were infilled.
- 2.1.10 No details exist as to the character, extent or depth of archaeological deposits within the site, as the 1960s development took place without any archaeological mitigation. Historic mapping suggests a characteristic medieval and post-medieval street layout, with an unplanned agglomeration of buildings fronting onto East Street, set within long narrow tenement plots (or multiples of the same where larger buildings extended across plot boundaries), containing outbuildings, cess and rubbish pits etc.
- 2.1.11 Historic mapping also indicates a number of public houses along the street, which may have had storage cellars which would have truncated earlier deposits. The rear plots may have had pits of various types up to several metres in depth.
- 2.1.12 The Tithe map of 1840 records the site as predominantly occupied by Wrecclesham Coppice – plantation and wood, however by the 1871 Ordnance Survey map a significant portion of the site has been opened up.
- 2.1.11 By 1916 Ordnance Survey a number of buildings have been constructed on the site and several smaller plots have been demarcated. Further structures are added by the 1934 Ordnance Survey. The site remains much unchanged in the 1961 and 1978 Ordnance Surveys.

2.2 Previous work

- 2.2.1 Six trial pits were open at the time of a site visit for the archaeological impact assessment (James 2018). The pits identified a 500mm thick concrete base slab across the entire footprint of the existing building. Where deposits were exposed beneath this, they were entirely made ground (brick and other building rubble within a soil matrix), with some clay evident at the rear of the building where it had been terraced into the hillside. A vertical brick wall was exposed in Trial Pit B, capped by the concrete slab and extending down 1.3m to a floor (identified by probing) – this pit coincided with the location of a 19th century pub (the Royal Oak), so the underground space is likely to be a backfilled and localised beer cellar. Trial Pits D-F were flooded at the time of the visit, though a large concrete foundation relating to the retaining wall was visible in F. Trial Pits G and H had not been excavated, but were only intended to be shallow to expose the foundations of the concrete columns extending along the front of the building. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were observed within the inspected pits.

2.3 Project Aims and Objectives

2.3.1 The aims of the evaluation are:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and deposits within the site
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits
- To enable the Archaeological Advisors to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work at the site

2.2.2 The site also has the potential to address a number of more specific research topics drawn from the Surrey Archaeological Research Framework:

- Understanding the medieval origins of the town and its medieval and post-medieval development
- Recovery of medieval and post-medieval pottery assemblages to further knowledge of the regional industries
- Recovery of artefactual material to better understand the economic and social history of the town.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.2 Two trenches were machine excavated and a [previously-dug] geotechnical borehole test-pit (Trench 2) recorded. The presence of live services necessitated the relocation of both trenches and the reduction in length of Trench 1 in the south-west. Trench 1 was 6m by 1.8m and Trench 3 was 10m by 1.8m and were excavated to a depth of 1.8m and 1.4m respectively.

3.1.3 Trenches (1 and 3) were mechanically excavated using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision, following the breaking-out and removal of any concrete hardstanding. Machine excavation continued to the top of the surface of underlying geological deposit of Gault Clay.

3.2 Archive

3.2.1 The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Tables 1 and 2).

Context sheets	6
Section sheets	0
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	5
Context register	0
Drawing register	0
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	2

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m	Height m AOD
1/001	Deposit	Tarmac and make-up	6m	1.8m	0.3m	67.10
1/002	Deposit	Modern overburden	6m	1.8m	1.5m	66.80
1/003	Deposit	Natural Gault clay	6m	1.8m	-	65.30

Table 3: Trench 1 list of recorded contexts

4.1.1 The natural blue grey Gault Clay [1/003] was located at 65.30m OD (Figure 3). Overlying was modern overburden [1/002] of brick rubble, redeposited clay and silts. Above was the make-up layer and tarmac surface [1/001]. No archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered.

4.2 Trench 2 geotechnical borehole test-pit

4.2.1 Trench 2 was a previously excavated geotechnical borehole (Figure 3). The upper portion of the concrete slab [2/001] in the c 1m by 1m area surrounding the borehole had been removed, but the underlying deposit was not visible. The borehole itself was filled with water. No archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered.

4.3 Trench 3

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Depth m	Height m AOD
3/001	Deposit	Tarmac and make-up	10m	1.8m	0.3m	69.25
3/002	Deposit	Modern overburden	10m	1.8m	1.1m	68.95
3/003	Deposit	Natural Gault clay	10m	1.8m	-	67.80

Table 4: Trench 3 list of recorded contexts

4.3.1 The natural orange Gault Clay [3/003] was located at 67.80m OD (Figure 3). Overlying was modern overburden [3/002] of brick rubble, redeposited clay and silts. Above was the make-up layer and tarmac surface [3/001]. No archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were recovered. The evaluated parts of the site appear to have been truncated to depths of between 65.30m OD and 67.80m OD. This truncation is probably associated with the construction of the 1960s underground car park.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASE, 2018 The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey, Archaeological Evaluation, Written Scheme of Investigation

Beale, G, 2015 *Desk-Based Heritage Assessment in respect of the Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey*. Unpublished Planning Heritage Ltd Report 1529.

James, R, 2018 *The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey: Archaeological Impact Assessment*. Unpublished Archaeology South-East report 2017535.

Surrey County Council, 2006 *Surrey Archaeological Research Framework*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank by Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd for commissioning the work and for their assistance throughout the project, and Nick Truckle, County Archaeologist Surrey County Council for his guidance and monitoring. The evaluation was directed by Giles Dawkes. Paul Mason managed the fieldwork and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.

HER Summary

Site code	WME18				
Project code	180453				
Planning reference	WA/2018/0458				
Site address	The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey				
District/Borough	Farnham				
NGR (12 figures)	484118 147022				
Geology	Gault clay				
Fieldwork type	Eval				
Date of fieldwork	November 2018				
Sponsor/client	Berkeley Homes (Southern)				
Project manager	Paul Mason				
Project supervisor	Giles Dawkes				
Period summary					
					Other
Project summary	<p>An archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey on the 1st and 12th November 2018. The fieldwork was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd in advance of a mixed-use redevelopment. Two trenches were excavated measuring up to 10m in length and a previously undertaken geotechnical test-pit recorded. No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were recovered. The evaluated parts of the site appear to have been truncated to depths of between 65.30m OD and 67.80m OD. This truncation is probably associated with the construction of the 1960s underground car park.</p>				
Museum/Accession No.					

Finds summary

Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
-	-	-	-

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-333637

Project details

Project name The Woolmead

Short description of the project An archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at The Woolmead, Farnham, Surrey on the 1st and 12th November 2018. The fieldwork was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Southern) Ltd in advance of a mixed-use redevelopment. Two trenches were excavated measuring up to 10m in length and a previously undertaken geotechnical test-pit recorded. No archaeological remains were identified and no finds were recovered. The evaluated parts of the site appear to have been truncated to depths of between 65.30m OD and 67.80m OD. This truncation is probably associated with the construction of the 1960s underground car park.

Project dates Start: 01-11-2018 End: 12-11-2018

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project reference codes WME18 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 180453 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches"

Development type Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England

Site location SURREY GUILDFORD GUILDFORD The Woolmeads, Farnham

Postcode GU9 7TX

Study area 1 Hectares

Site coordinates SU 484118 147022 50.929187867138 -1.311053003192 50 55
45 N 001 18 39 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 67m Max: 69m

Project creators

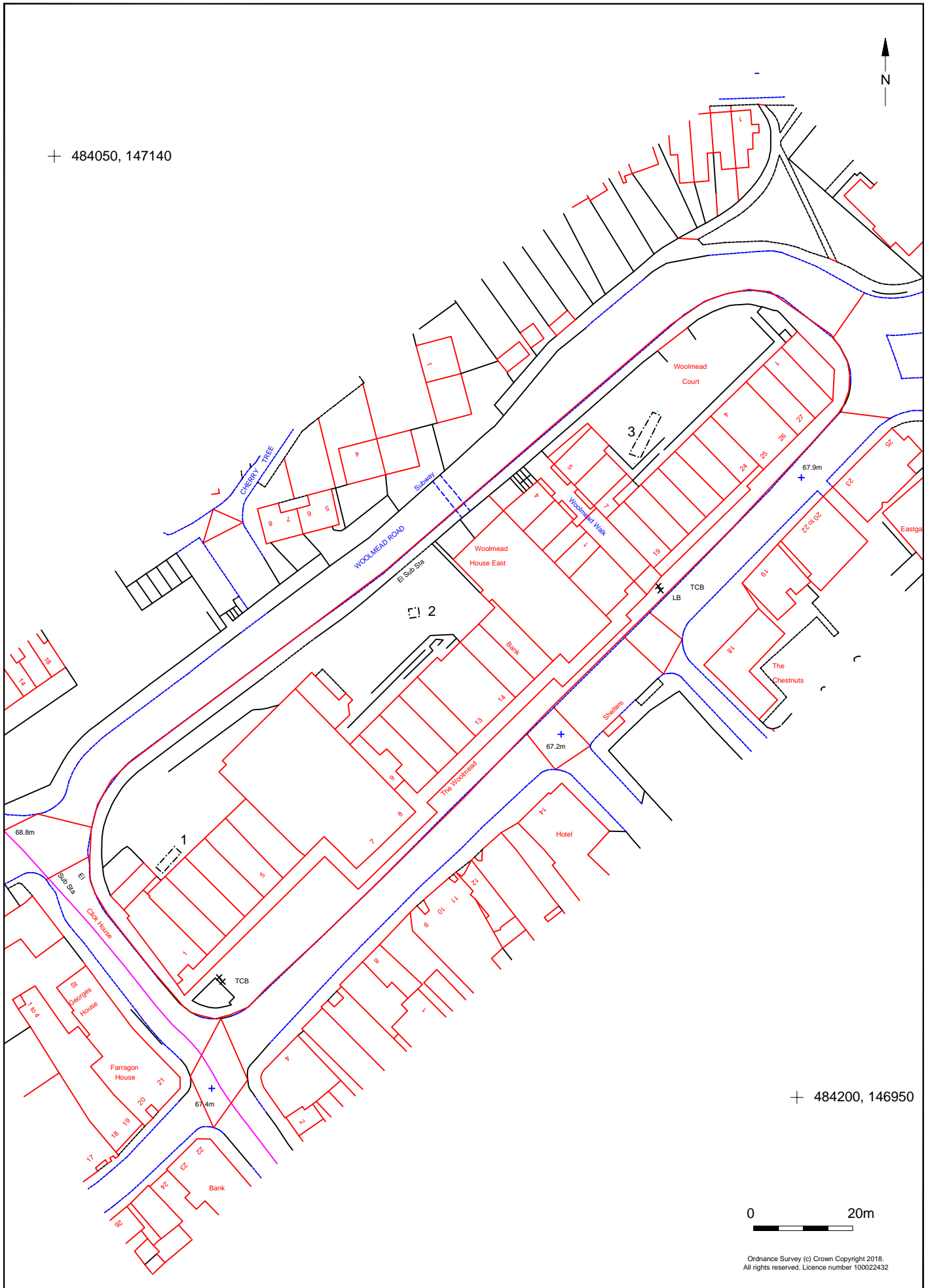
Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator	Surrey County Council
Project design originator	Surrey County Council
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	Giles Dawkes
Type of sponsor/funding body	Private
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Photograph", "Report"
Entered by	Giles Dawkes (giles.dawkes@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	13 November 2018



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© Archaeology South-East		The Woolmead, Farnham		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 180453	November 2018	Site location		
Report Ref: 2018363	Drawn by: JC			



© Archaeology South-East		The Woolmead, Farnham	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 180453	November 2018	Trench location	
Report Ref: 2018363	Drawn by: JC		



Trench 1 looking north



Trench 2 looking north-east



Trench 3 looking north west

© Archaeology South-East		The Woolmead, Farnham	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 180453	November 2018	Trench photographs	
Report Ref: 2018363	Drawn by: JC		

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